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be so far ahead of our time that our policies will be impractical; but we do desire to be abreast of the best thought of the time, and if possible to be its guide. It is not true that a newspaper should be only as advanced in its ethical atmosphere as it conceives the average of its readers to be. No man who is not in ethical advance of the average of his community should be in the profession of journalism. We declare therefore as follows:

25. We will keep our writings and our publications free from unrefinement, except so far as we may sincerely believe publication of sordid details to be for the social good.

26. We will consider all that we write or publish for public consumption in the light of its effect upon social policy, refraining from writing or from publishing if we believe our material to be socially detrimental.

27. We will regard our privilege of writing for publication or publishing for public consumption as an enterprise that is social as well as commercial in character, and therefore will at all times have an eye against doing anything counter to social interest.

28. We believe it an essential part of this policy that we shall not be respecters of persons.

that we write, solicit, or print. We believe that the same canons of truth and justice should apply in advertising and circulation as we are adopting for news and editorial matter. We therefore agree to the following business principles:

29. We will cooperate with those social interests whose business it is to raise the ethical standard of advertising.

30. We will discourage and bar from our columns advertising which in our belief is intended to deceive the reader in his estimate of what is advertised. (This clause is intended to cover the many phases of fraud, and unfair competition, and the advertising of articles that seem likely to be harmful to the purchaser's morals or health.)

31. We will not advertise our own newspaper or its circulation boastfully, or otherwise, in terms not in harmony with the clauses of this code of ethics. (This is intended to cover misleading statements to the public or to advertisers as to the whole number of copies printed, number of paid-up subscribers, number of street sales, and percentage of local circulation.)

32. We will not make our printing facilities available for the production of advertising which we believe to be socially harmful or fraudulent in its intent.

VII. ADVERTISING AND CIRCULATION

We repudiate the principle of "letting the buyer beware." We cannot agree to guarantee advertising, but we assume a definite attitude toward the advertising

To the foregoing code we subscribe heartily as a part of our duty to society and of our belief that the salvation of the world can come only through the acceptance and practice by the people of the world of a sound and practical ethical philosophy.

Code of Ethics for Newspapers

Proposed by W. E. Miller of the *St. Mary's Star*
and

Adopted by the Kansas State Editorial Association at the State Convention
of the Kansas Editorial Association, March 8, 1910

FOR THE PUBLISHER

In Advertising

Definition.—Advertising is news, or views, of a business or professional enterprise which leads directly to its profits or increased business.

News of the industrial or commercial development of an institution which in no way has a specific bearing upon the merits of its products is not advertising.

Besides news which leads to a profit advertising also includes communications and reports, cards of thanks, etc., over the space of which the Editor has no control. Charges for the latter become more in the nature of a penalty to restrict their publication.

Responsibility.—The authorship of an advertisement should be so plainly stated in the context or at the end that it could not

avoid catching the attention of the reader before he has left the matter.

Unsigned advertisements in the news columns should either be preceded or followed by the word "advertisement" or its abbreviation.

We hold that the publisher should in no degree be held responsible for the statement of fact or opinion found in an advertisement.¹

Freedom of Space.—We hold the right of the publisher to become a broker in land, loan, rental and mercantile transactions through his want and advertising columns and condemn any movement of those following such lines to restrict this right of the publisher to the free sale of his space for the purpose of bringing buyer and seller together.

This shall not be construed to warrant the publisher as such in handling the details, terms, etc., of the trade, but merely in safeguarding his freedom in selling his space to bring the buyer and seller together, leaving the bargaining to the principals.

Our advertising is to bring together the buyer and the seller, and we are not concerned whether it is paid for and ordered by the producer, the consumer or a middleman.

Acceding to any other desires on the part of traders is knocking the foundations out from under the advertising business—the freedom of space. We hold that the freedom of space (where the payment is not a question) should only be restricted

¹ *Argument.*—I have no objection to practically any method being used by the advertiser to induce the reader to read his advertisement, providing the reader learns before he is through that it is an advertisement. Such methods include using the same type for headings and body as is used in the regular news stories, even wording the beginning of the advertisement around a topic upon which the mind of the public is riveted. But because these have not been marked as advertisements the public has often been made to believe that the expression of some fake in his advertisement was the expression of the editor and they have blindly bitten because of this trust. I have a number of such exhibits here, anyone interested may examine. To use an advertising cross rule is not sufficiently plain to the public; to use different kinds of type for the heading or body butchers the color

by the moral decency of the advertising matter.²

We hold that the freedom of space denies us the right to sign any contract with a firm which contains any restrictions against the wording of the copy which we may receive from any other firm, even to the mentioning of the goods of the first firm by name.

Compensation.—We condemn the signing of contracts carrying with them the publication of any amount of free reading matter.

We condemn the acceptance of any exchange articles, trade checks, or courtesies in payment for advertising, holding that all advertising should be paid for in cash.

harmony of the paper. If we would refuse to print an indecent advertisement to protect the morals of the reader, we should, in order to protect the confiding trust of the reader, refuse to print as our own (that is, without an advertisement mark) that a man was great, notable, expert, competent, when we would not say this over our personal signature. The near news nature of an advertisement makes its offense in this matter more serious. Politicians recognize our weakness in this respect and will pay hundreds of dollars to have stories printed provided we make sure that they appear as news stories. Neither they nor the editor would personally sign these, yet the public holds the editor responsible.

The only method which preserves the artistic form and color of the paper, and gives the reader a certain idea of the authority of that which he reads is to mark it with the word: advertisement. The city of San Francisco has so far recognized the political necessity for such a course that they have incorporated it into law, making it a felony to sell the columns of a newspaper unless they are plainly marked as columns sold. *The "Argument" in the footnotes is that presented by Mr. Miller when placing this code before the Kansas State Editorial Association.—The Editor.*

² *Argument:* In the case of many questionable speculative propositions there may be objection to this interpretation of the freedom of space. Upon these I hold that the freedom of space demands that we take the money, print the advertisement, but see that the copy is so worded that the responsibility rests entirely with the promoter. We do not run speculative assurance associations to protect people from their misjudgments.

We condemn the giving of secret rebates upon the established advertising rate as published.

Rates.—All advertising rates should be on a unit per thousand basis and all advertisers are entitled to a full knowledge of the circulation, not only of the quantity but also of the distribution. Statements of circulation should show the number of bona fide subscribers, the number of exchanges, the number of complimentaries, and the number sold to newsdealers, and if possible the locality of distribution, in a general way.

Position.—Position contracts should be charged a fixed percentage above the established rate of the paper, and no contracts should be signed wherein a failure to give the position required results in a greater reduction from the established rate than the position premium is greater than the established rate.

Comparisons.—We consider it beneath the dignity of a publisher to place in his columns statements which make invidious comparisons between the amount of advertising carried or the circulation of his paper and that of his competitor.

Press Agents and Unpaid Advertising.—The specific trade name of an article of commerce, or the name of a merchant, manufacturer or professional man WITH REFERENCE to his wares, products, or labors should not be mentioned in a pure news story.³

We condemn as against *moral decency*

³ *Argument.*—Because of our failure to have and maintain a rule of this kind we have fallen a prey to the enterprising press agents, doctors, lawyers, merchants, and manufacturers all over the country. The land, mining, railroad, industrial, exploitation companies through their high salaried press agents work us for columns of matter every year under the guise of news reports. The enterprising doctor and lawyer in your city through courtesies bestowed upon your reporters, make you the instruments for building them up a phenomenal practice and great wealth, leaving you their honied words and social courtesies with which to blot out the red in your bank book. The doctor, aside from the innumerable notices in connection with his cases, especially if they be of the sensational sort, secures a world of advertising through your society columns by his social eminence in the use of his title of distinction.

the publication of any advertisement which will OBVIOUSLY lead to any form of retrogression, such as private medical personals, indecent massage parlor advertisements, private matrimonial advertisements, physician's or hospital's advertisement for the care of private diseases, which carry in them any descriptive or suggestive matter, of the same.

In Circulation

Definition.—Circulation is the entire list of first hand readers of a publication and comprises the paid readers, complimentary readers, exchange readers, and advertising readers.

Compensation.—Subscriptions should be solicited and received only on a basis of cash consideration, the paper and its payment being the only elements to the transaction.

Newsdealers.—The purchase of a quantity of papers should be made outright, allowing for no return of unsold copies.

Gambling.—We condemn the practice of securing subscriptions through the sale or gift of chances.

Complimentaries.—Complimentary copies should not be sent to doctors, lawyers, ministers, postal clerks, police or court officials for news or mailing privileges.

In Estimating

Definition.—Estimating is the science of computing costs. Its conclusion is the price.

Basis.—We do not favor the establishment of a minimum rate card for advertising which would be uniform among publishers, but we do favor a more thorough understanding of the subject of costs and commend to our members the labors of the American Printers Cost Commission of the First International Cost Congress recently held in Chicago. Let us learn our costs and then each establish a rate card based upon our investment and the cost of production, having no consideration for the comparative ability of the advertisers to pay, or the semi-news nature of the advertisement.

Quantity Discount.—We consider it unwise to allow discounts greater than 10 per cent from the rate of first insertion for succeeding insertions.

*News.*⁴

Definition.—News is the impartial report of the activities of mind, men and matter which do not offend the moral sensibilities of the more enlightened people.

Lies.—We condemn against truth:

(1) The publication of fake illustrations of men and events of news interest, however marked their similarity, without an accompanying statement that they are not real pictures of the event or person but only suggestive imitations.

(2) The publication of fake interviews made up of the assumed views of an individual, without his consent.

(3) The publication of interviews in

⁴Argument in Defense of News Code: This news code is concerned with truth, justice, morality and decency in the presentation of news. The good in journalism so far outweighs the bad that it is a much shorter course to state the negative propositions, leaving us thereby great freedom in the things we may do. Events relating to the political, commercial, industrial and moral welfare of the general body of the people should be brought to the foreground without hard restriction, while events which relate more to individuals should receive a stricter application of the code. In the case of the latter such events as suicides, divorces, rapes should be minimized and given more obscure positions. The rabble read that which arouses their interest more readily than they read that which concerns their welfare, but the more enlightened do not, or rather they are more interested in that which concerns their welfare, and if we would ever gain any dignity for the professional side of newspaper work, we must cater to the latter class.

We have offended by publishing all of the scandalous details of the divorces and the fall of men holding high places of trust—exploiting the criminality of criminals. The offenses of our yellow type were such during the Thaw trial that the President, for the sake of moral decency, overstepped his power and by the mere force of his personality and position denied the right of the mail to papers containing verbatim reports of that case.

During the time of the National Peace Congress in Chicago, about one of twenty dailies gave it a big head on the first page, while the others gave it brief or rear page notice, while at the same time they were forging to the first positions embezzlements, murders, social scandals, divorces and war dope on the relations between Germany and England, aiding in the

quotations unless the exact, approved language of the interviewed be used. When an interview is not an exact quotation it should be obvious in the reading that *only* the thought and impression of the interviewer is being reported.

(4) The issuance of fake news dispatches whether the same have for their purpose the influencing of stock quotations, elections, or the sale of securities or merchandise. Some of the greatest advertising in the world has been stolen through the news columns in the form of dispatches from

unconscious movement to draw these two great nations into open hostilities. Let us cease to publish in piquant detail the suicides, murders, divorces or scandalous happenings, for imitation, emulation and suggestion creep with fearful force into the emotional natures of those who delight in such reading.

Let us spend more time in searching for and exploiting the virtues of men in their relations to themselves, their fellow men and their Creator.

In the language of President Hopkins of Williams college, "The enormous gain in the ratio of crime to the population is beyond question owing largely to the increased publication of the details of beastial crimes. These realistic descriptions constitute the suggestions in the technical sense of the word which act upon the half normal, undeveloped natures of the multitudes. The theory of suggestion as an element in criminal activity has long been admitted by all students of crime and criminals."

It has been said that the publication of crimes and misdeeds of men and women has afforded the public a knowledge of the evils existing in our social system, which being revolting to their sensibilities has resulted in corrective measures. This is the first of two strong arguments against my theory which I will answer briefly. The stories of crimes and misdeeds are devoured by those anxious for maudlin sentiment with a consequent depravity in their natures, natures which in the first place need not a great deal to make them like unto their mental associates. One who has an ideal thoroughly set in his mind to investigate evils with the purpose of devising their remedy may witness them without moral injury, but the indifferent witness them with the result of arousing the latent evils in their own natures. A physician having before him the desire to correct the ills of health may view the nude human form without ill suggestion; the artist with the ideal of portraying perfection in form may see no ill in what to the unconcerned would be suggestive and productive of injury;

unscrupulous press agents. Millions have been made on the rise and fall of stock quotations caused by newspaper lies, sent out by designing reporters.

Injustice.—We condemn as against justice:

(1) The practice of reporters making detectives and spies of themselves in their endeavors to investigate the guilt or innocence of those under suspicion.

Reporters should not enter the domain of law in the apprehension of criminals. They should not become a detective or sweating agency for the purpose of furnishing excitement to the readers.

No suspect should have his hope of a just liberty foiled through the great prejudice which the public has formed against him because of the press verdict

the priest in the confessional, having before his mind the ideal of soul perfection, sees no ill in the narration of the immoral conduct of another, but with the purposeless and idealless onlooker any of these afford a most dangerous source of depraving temptation. A sufficient number of learned, honest and patriotic lawyers, jurists, doctors, and ministers and editors will know all that is necessary to know of the baser evils of the day to formulate programs for their improvement without the danger of opening this knowledge to the general public. Their conclusions and statistical summaries will be sufficient to crystallize public sentiment to the proper remedy without the publication of the details.

Again it is said that those who do not fear the Law, who do not fear God, do fear publicity, hence our obligation to publish the salacious details of the misdeeds of moral perverts—that they would fear the public shame. One word will settle this. That individual who is so devoid of any enlightened conscience as to respect neither religious sentiment nor the hand of the law, most certainly does not care a rap for the opinion of the general public, and as for uncovering any mask under which he has been living, any man who is very heavily steeped in vice is known as such to his own acquaintances.

The police of this city of Wichita recently stopped the Emmett Dalton moving picture show from reproducing the Dalton raid at Coffeyville, and they based their action on the ground that the pictures are of a kind to impair the morals of susceptible youths. Their action was commended by our press, while our news columns were picturing with equal piquancy the details of the crimes and misdeeds of the day.

slyly couched in the news report, even before his arrest.

We should not even by insinuation interpret of facts our conclusions, unless by signature we become personally responsible for them. Exposition, explanation, and interpretation should be left to the field of the expert or specialist with a full consciousness of his personal responsibility.

(2) The publication of the rumors and common gossips or the assumptions of a reporter relative to a suspect pending his arrest or the final culmination of his trial. A staff of reporters is not a detective agency, and the right of a suspect to a fair

Frederick Peterson in *Colliers* for September 1906 says, "Investigation seems to show that the circulation of the newspaper increases the lower it descends in the scale of immorality. These newspapers represent in the domain of culture and enlightenment the mob spirit, a vast impersonal, delirious, anarchic, degenerating force. And it is this force which, acting upon the minds of the masses, sways them irresistibly in its own direction, making chaos where there should be order, familiarizing them with crime, presenting the worst features of human life for their emulation, and imitation, and working insidiously by suggestion to induce in them noxious thoughts which often lead to harmful deeds."

In the language of Wm. Smithers, of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: "We are all criminals; we must say none of us are perfect. There is a world of savagery in us all, underneath the veneer of civilization; that is why we should abstain from saying vengeful things about other criminals. It calls up the savagery within us and incites it in others. That is why it is an evil thing for newspapers to publish the details of crime: it ought to be prohibited as the details of executions are prohibited in certain states."

The elements of sympathy, indignation, terror and awe in human nature are played upon by the publishers with a craze for circulation. As morbid reading makes circulation and circulation makes advertising, the life blood of today's newspaper comes in a great measure from morbidity. Divided, we are compelled to do it, or our competitor will reap the harvest. United upon a common ideal of newspaper ethics, the public can discriminate, and they will enable us to thrive, and honor us for our ideals, whilst otherwise ere long the hand of the law will crush our abuses and with the crushing take many of our essential liberties.

and impartial trial is often confounded by a reporter's practice of printing every ill-founded rumor of which he gets wind.

Indecencies.—Classification: for the sake of clearness and order crimes with which we will be concerned may be divided into those which offend against the PUBLIC TRUST (such as bribery, defalcation or embezzlement by a public official); those which offend against PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS or EMPLOYERS (which are also often defalcations and betrayals of confidence); and crimes which offend against PRIVATE MORALITY most often centering around the family relation.

(1) In dealing with the suspicions against PUBLIC OFFICIALS or trustees we urge that ONLY FACTS put in their TRUE RELATION and records be used in the news reports.

No presumption or conclusion of the reporter should be allowed to enter, even though it has all the elements of a correct conclusion.

Conclusions and presumptions should be placed in interviews with the identity of their author easily apparent.

If an editor desires to draw a conclusion on the case let him sign it. Do not hide behind the impersonality of the paper with your personal opinions.

(2) In dealing with the suspicions against agents of private institutions facts alone put in their true relation should again be used.

But in this class of stories suspicions and conclusions should be confined to those of the parties directly interested, and no statement of one party to the affair reflecting upon another should be published without at the same time publishing a statement of the accused relative thereto.

The comment of those not directly involved should not be published previous to the arrest or pending the trial.

(3) In dealing with the offenses against private morality we should refuse to print any record of the matter, however true, until the warrant has been filed or the arrest made, and even then our report should contain only an epitome of the charges by the plaintiff and the answers by the defendant, preferably secured from their respective attorneys.

No society gossips or scandals, however true, should ever be published concerning such cases.

However prominent the principals, offenses against private morality should never receive *first page position* and their details should be eliminated as much as possible.

Certain crimes against private morality which are revolting to our finer sensibilities should be ignored entirely; however, in the event of their having become public with harmful exaggerations we may make an elementary statement, couched in the least suggestive language.

In no case should the reckless daring of the suspect be lionized.

(4) Except when the suspect has escaped his picture should never be printed.

FOR THE EDITOR

Views

Definition.—Views are the impressions, beliefs, or opinions which are published in a paper, whether from the editorial staffs of the same, outside contributors or secured interviews.

A Distinction.—We hold that whenever a publication confines the bulk of its views to any particular line of thought, class of views, or side of a mooted question, it becomes to that extent a class publication, and inasmuch ceases to be a newspaper.

An Explanation.—You will note by our definition of news that it is the impartial portrayal of the decent activities of mind, men and matter. This definition applied to class publications would be changed by replacing the word IMPARTIAL with the word PARTIAL.

In this section we will deal with IMPARTIALITY in the presentation of the decent activities of the mind of the community—with the views or editorial policy of a paper.

Responsibility.—Whereas a view or conclusion is the product of some mind or minds, and whereas the value and significance of a view is dependent upon the known merit of its author or authors, the reader is entitled and has the right to know the personal identity of the author, whether by the signature in a communica-

tion, the statement of the reporter in an interview or the caption in a special article and the paper as such should in no wise become an advocate.⁵

⁵ *Explanation and Argument.*—In presenting the activities of men and matter we should have regard for truth, regard for justice, regard for decency, while in the presentation of the activities of mind we should have regard for fairness, for impartiality—ours is a mission of presentation rather than one of formation. If a publication is a newspaper this fact should be stated in a conspicuous place; if a class publication it should state the line of thought it pretends to portray or defend.

There are a number of reasons for impartiality in presenting views, and its consequent absence of an editorial policy for NEWS papers. Facts must be the foundation for all opinion. In social economics some agency must have the exclusive duty of providing the facts in their true relation. In the fitness of things this is the duty of the news press.

It is not probable that facts would all be printed in their true relation if their portrayers possessed motives for placing them in an untrue relation. Few men would lie outright, but to sustain their own views many men will convey an untruth by juggled arrangement of the relation of facts.

The presence in our country of a press devoted to the presentation of facts in their true relation is vitally essential to our political, economic, social and moral welfare. Hence when the intrusion of any notice would tend to generally disturb the presentation of facts in their true relation, we should repel the motive.

To sustain our personal views, the views of our advertisers, those of our political and financial friends, has often been the motive which disturbed our proper presentation of facts and views in their true relation. This motive may be called the editorial policy. If we did not have an editorial policy to sustain, large advertising, financial, political, and social interests to sustain, we would cease to have a serious motive for distorting the true relation of facts and the free relation of views.

Without gunpowder that is dry, armies cannot win.

Without truth of fact unencumbered by the false impression of untrue relations, social, economic and moral enlightenment must come to a dead standstill. Other things are needed, it is true, such as correct principles, but a first essential is facts, properly related. This is the mission of the news press—to secure it, let us cease to have editorial policies for the news press and demand that if a publisher wishes to run

Influence (editorial).—We should avoid permitting large institutions or persons to own stock in or make loans to our publishing business if we have reasonable grounds to believe that their interests would be

a partisan, or class organ, that he state the party or class of thought he pretends to defend, in a conspicuous place, that the reader may season his statements of fact and opinion with the motive which would underlie their presentation. We haven't the slightest objection to an editor running a partisan paper but he should make his partisanship known.

The elimination of the editorial policy would turn our attention to the views of our community. In a government by the people a prime essential is a free press. If the people have a free press and no ideas that essential becomes worthless. If you accustom the people to the habit of turning to the press for their ideas it soon becomes a government by the press, and of course for those who control the press.

If we permit our publishing institutions the privilege of having editorial opinions, our advertisers who control so much of our incomes will control our columns, and business is the least competent to create public opinion upon a public question, for it has become so habituated to measuring everything by its profit earning capacity that it can seldom consider a proposition except through the lens of its own special interest. And too often our advertisers and financial backers do demand this privilege, cautiously, 'tis true, but nevertheless firmly.

Strong editors have battled against this tendency for years but the people on the outside cannot appreciate what a decided stand otherwise really good and worthy men will take against an editor who is also good and worthy, because he does not agree with them upon public questions and men.

We boast of a free press—the most vigorous censorship in the world is the censorship which the business of the large advertisers have over our columns.

A lawyer would be disbarred if he contracted to sell his knowledge of law to one client and at the same time accepted a fee from the second party to the case. A newspaper in its analysis is a contract of an editor to sell his knowledge of his field to his subscribers; and his acceptance of a fee by any one whose interests are affected by the presentation of such knowledge is a contradiction of his obligation, with the result that the client with the largest fee gets the best of his service.

Such a practice would disbar a lawyer and the same principle of fair play which it violates

seriously affected by any other than a true presentation of all news and a free willingness to present every possible point of view under signature or interview.

in law it violates in the case of the editor. We should either run an advertising paper and acknowledge that our viewpoint is that of the advertisers or we should run a newspaper and make good our contract with our subscribers.

If we run a newspaper and receive the bulk of our income from our advertisers our success becomes vitally dependent upon that of the big advertiser and we voice what suits his interests to increase our income. Now when the interests of the advertiser and the readers are in harmony, no mischief is done, but when they conflict is where the wedge begins to enter into the violation of our contracts with the reader.

Charles Russell says: "No newspaper of standing would venture to print any matter condemned by business, nor fail to print any matter, though sometimes very ill-founded, that business required to have printed."

Realizing that winning patronage and exploiting one's convictions of conscience do not mix with success, let us publish papers without a partisan or editorial policy, but extending every possible latitude and encouragement to all classes of people to voice all decent opinions.

Let us not formulate legislation, conduct campaigns for public men or measures or organize movements.

Business will entertain a desire (to which it knows the sensitive editor will respond) for a sentiment which, were they made personally responsible, they would not permit for a moment.

The night riders of Kentucky will do when their identity is unknown that which their own sense of shame would forbid were it otherwise.

Some tell us that we should stand for the right of the masses even though it does oppose the interests of our greatest patrons. They say that heroes and patriots sacrificed wealth and honor for truth and justice. This is not generally true. At best they sacrificed but the opportunities for wealth and honor. Power, wealth and fame never tasted cannot be a sacrifice.

But the metropolitan publisher of today, with his millions invested, with his years of toil invested, with his thousands borrowed upon a business worth based on its earning capacity, with his daily expense bill running into the thousands, with financial, social and political bankruptcy staring him in the face whenever he contemplates a policy of justice to, or sympathy for the unorganized masses, upon a matter which

Influence (reportorial).—No reporter should be retained who accepts any courtesies, unusual favors, opportunities for self gain, or side employment from any factors whose interests would be affected

goes contrary to the interests of his big business patrons, is tempting a sacrifice of that which he has already tasted, wealth, power and fame, and though such a course would not lead to the guillotine, it would practically lead to a repudiation of his debts, which would in itself be a moral crime, for self preservation is the first law of nature.

If you can't drink whiskey without getting drunk don't drink it at all. If your paper as an impersonal institution can't express an opinion from your free and enlightened conscience, don't express one at all. Make it a business institution dealing in the news and opinions of others.

There is another and quite as powerful reason. No man knows nor understands all things. No staff of news editors are competent to pass upon all questions of public interest. To enlighten the public upon mooted questions, secure the expressions of specialists, and make them personally responsible for the same.

We do not have the sluggish to fear, it is the eminently respectable business and professional men who through subtle suggestion, conscious of the power they hold over our welfare, compel us to echo the ideas which are theirs. Men of affairs expect and get special favors, and the corrupt politician is maintained in power through the exchange of these favors, as business men need favors of the legislature also.

No better evidence of the decline of the value of our press opinions can be found than many recent cases where city elections have been carried against the united opinion of the press. Press freedom like personal freedom is good, but its permanence like that of the latter is only secured by good moral self-control, hence the necessity of an organized code of ethics. Our great dailies are great impersonal machines—adjuncts of the business and political world. Reënter the personality by extensive interviews requiring all opinion of the staff to be identified by the author. A man so far away from us as Tolstoy, who is a keen observer of affairs, tells us there exists in this country a so-called free press, but it is only apparent, for the whole press is controlled by wealthy persons admitting of no advancement for the plainest people.

Let opinions be as free as the air we breathe. Jefferson tells us that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself, she is the proper and sufficient antagonist of error, and has nothing to

by the manner in which his reports are made.⁶

Deception.—We should not allow the presumed knowledge on the part of the interviewed that we are newspaper men to permit us to quote them without their explicit permission, but where such knowledge is certain we insist upon our right to print the views unless directly forbidden.

Faith with Interviewed.—An interview or statement should not be displayed pre-

fear from the conflict unless by HUMAN INTERPOSITION disarmed of her natural weapons—free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them. The theory of a free press demands the liberty to know and to utter according to conscience, and it should be our duty to restrict that utterance to the conscience. We have a free will to do good or evil; if we do not do good a power greater than ourselves will destroy this freedom and its possessor.

My proposal that every view have the personal identity of its owner apparent and that the paper as an institution should not pretend to have that which no impersonal thing could have—views, emphasis, responsibility and impartiality in presenting the activities of mind.

"There is a tendency," says John J. Hamilton, "always for existing institutions, good and bad, to own the press and control its utterances. New ideas, valuable as well as visionary, have difficulty in getting a hearing; yet it is to the interest of society that they have free vent—the valuable ones so that they may be adopted and

vious to its publication without the permission of the author.

Bounds of Publicity.—A man's name and portrait are his private property and the point where they cease to be private and become public should be defined for our association.

the visionary ones so that they may find expression and lose their explosive force.

As generations are added to the history of newspaper making we must at times rescue our freedom of expression from the subtle encroachments of the power of wealth, of law, of finance and of commerce. You may say that such a practice as I would make common to the newspapers, would make the expression, public opinion, a synonym for chaos. Well, let us abhor a crystallized public opinion for is not such a condition an evidence of intellectual stupidity. Let the news press be the battle ground, the arena, of the ideas of the people, leaving to the class publications the work of proclaiming or defending any particular set of ideas.

⁶ *Note.*—The larger perspective and experience of men of affairs would make of them a wiser influence upon the policy of a paper were it not that their own interests so often run contrary to the interests of the great unorganized masses. It is not a matter of intelligence with the masses—we admit in general the superior wisdom of great industrial, financial and commercial giants who have come from the ground up, but deny their proper interest and sympathy as a potent factor in moulding the policy of a paper.

Declaration of Principles and Code of Practice

Adopted by the Missouri Press Association at Columbia, Missouri, May 27, 1921

PREAMBLE

IN America, where the stability of the government rests upon the approval of the people, it is essential that newspapers, the medium through which the people draw their information, be developed to a high point of efficiency, stability, impartiality and integrity. The future of the republic depends on the maintenance of a high standard among Journalists. Such a standard cannot be maintained unless the motives and conduct of the members of our profession are such as merit approval and confidence.

The profession of Journalism is entitled to stand side by side with the other learned professions and is, far more than any other, interwoven with the lines of public service. The Journalist can not consider this profession rightly unless he recognizes his obligation to the public. A newspaper does not belong solely to its owner and is not fulfilling its highest functions if devoted selfishly. Therefore the Missouri Press Association presents the following principles as a general guide, not as a set form of rules, for the practice of Journalism.